

# Resources for Learning and Teaching PLANT IDENTIFICATION

This guide is available on the KNPS website.

KNPS Members who have contributed to this document are: Nancy Goulden, Phyllis Scherich, Jeff Hansen, Mike Haddock, Karen Hummel and the Board Members who shared their "Words of Wisdom."

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# Resources for Learning and Teaching Plant Identification



## ***INTRODUCTION***

In the Kansas Native Plant Society Mission Statement, one of the goals related to native plant awareness and appreciation is “promoting education.” Central to helping members, friends, and other interested parties learn about the native plants of our state is to provide materials designed to develop and refine skills of plant identification.

There is no one “right” way to learn plant identification. Many of us just stumbled on what worked for us through trial and error. Others first met plant identification in a botany class. This document shares insights and discoveries from the varied experiences and reflections of KNPS members about plant identification.

Each of the following sections focuses on learners at different identification-skill levels, from novice to those with considerable experience. Most “units” can be used either by individuals working on their id skills alone or as lecture/discussion frameworks for workshops or training sessions. Some suggest a procedure; others focus on resource materials. Sections [Coaching Plant Identification](#) and [Opportunities to Share Plant Identification Information](#) fit more under the “teaching” category. The sections do not have to be used in the order they appear here. Users can pick and choose whatever fits their needs.

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## SECTIONS

- I. **Teaching Yourself to Identify Native Plants**—Gives those who are just beginning to learn about plant identification a process to use independently or with other beginners. Walks the newcomer through the simple basic steps of using a field guide, in a natural setting, to identify and confirm frequently seen plants. Meant to provide the foundation for later, higher-level learning about plant id.
- II. **How To Get the Most Out of Your Field Guide**—Designed for those who have some background and experience in using a field guide for identification, but are now ready to move beyond relying mostly on pictures. Provides many suggestions about using the plant descriptions and special features of the guide to accelerate identification success.
- III. **What To Do When A “Mystery Plant” Is Not In Your Field Guide**—Provides lists of recommended resources including region-specific field guides and books, internet addresses, and Kansas herbariums. This will be very helpful to those with experience in identifying plants who occasionally get stymied by a “new” plant.
- IV. **Moving Beyond the Basics: Looking at Specific Plant and Location Features**—Created for those experienced at identifying plants who are ready to learn and use less obvious features of plant structure and plant habitat for identification. The section includes an extensive check-list of such features to serve as reminders or new clues for distinguishing between similar species or those that are unusually difficult to identify.
- V. **Guidelines for Coaching Plant Identification**—Presents an alternative for those teaching plant identification that goes beyond just naming plants or giving information. Gives coaching strategies that can be used during on-site outings that promote recognition of plant and habitat features, while reinforcing retention of plant information. This section includes techniques that encourage interactions and individual practice that strengthen independent use of the process of plant identification.
- VI. **Opportunities to Share Plant Identification Information**—Here are some suggestions of events and approaches that KNPS members can develop to teach and promote plant identification. Some are related to KNPS events; others focus on occasions that would be available to the public or special interest groups. Included is a section on KNPS Wildflower Patch Classes.
- VII. **Words of Wisdom from Passionate Native Plant Fans**—Individual KNPS members share their favorite advice and suggestions about how to learn plant identification. No two are alike. All are useful and sound.

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## TEACHING YOURSELF TO IDENTIFY WILDFLOWERS

*Target Audience: hobbyists, landowners, and managers who are just starting to learn to identify plants*

Often, after being awed by a striking display of wildflowers in bloom, people want to know the names of “that brilliant orange plant” or the “delicate white flower that is everywhere.” Someone who knows the flowers well can provide a name, but for those who want the satisfaction of getting to know, not just the name, but the plant itself better, it may be time to start to teach yourself about our native and introduced plants. The process of identifying a plant is reasonably easy and the excitement of the first time you work out the identity of a plant all by yourself is a life-long memory.

1. Either **buy or get from the library a field guide** that includes the plants from the geographical and ecological areas (prairie, woodlands) where you will be finding plants. A book with colored pictures, detailed written descriptions, and sketches showing the basic structures of plants is recommended. (**Note:** if you are primarily interested in identifying grasses or woody plants, you may need a special field guide.)
2. Work on identifying the **living plant** at the place where it is growing rather than trying to remember the details later.
3. Study the plant for **color of bloom**, overall **structure of the flowering part** of the plant, and details such as **number of petals**.
4. Go to your guide book and find **pictures of plants with the same color bloom** as “your” plant.
5. Find the picture that **most closely resembles** “your” plant’s flowers’ shape and arrangement.
6. Now you need to **compare other features (e.g. leaves, stems, fruits)** with the written description of the plant given in the guide to confirm your tentative identification. Check the field guide glossary for unfamiliar terms. Look in the field guide for sketches of leaf arrangements, shapes, edge and vein patterns.

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7. Four easy characteristics that can quickly help you confirm or reject your tentative identification are height of plant, bloom period, habitat and range of plant.
  - a. Does the height of the plant match the height stated in the guide?
  - b. Does the month/season match the season stated in the guide?
  - c. Does the habitat where you found the plant match the description?
  - d. Is it found in the part of the state where you found the plant?
8. If any factor does not match your plant, go back to step 4 and try another possibility.
9. Once you are confident you have identified the plant, pat yourself on the back. However you may also want to talk with either an experienced plant person or someone else who is also learning to identify plants. In either case, go through your evidence and support your choices step-by-step to the other party.
10. Some plant fans find it helpful to carry a small notebook in which to record the date, general and specific locations of each new plant you identify. Another alternative is to write the date and location in YOUR field guide itself. Either way next time or next year you see the plant, you can come back to your record.
11. Once you have experienced these basic building blocks, you can continue to add more "new" plants and extend your knowledge about botanical terms in the descriptions.

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## HOW TO GET THE MOST OUT OF YOUR FIELD GUIDE

*Target Audience: Hobbyists, Landowners, and Managers with moderate plant-identification experience*

1. Familiarize yourself with the guide.
  - a. Determine the geographic area covered by the guide.
  - b. Determine the type of plants covered by the guide (e.g. prairie wildflowers, woody plants, grasses)
  - c. Locate the **Glossary**. Use it to look up unfamiliar terms.
  - d. Locate and refer to **sketches of plant structures** to confirm your understanding of botanical descriptors.
  - e. Check for an **Identification Key** to identifying plants covered by the guide.
  - f. Read the **Introduction** to the guide. Often it explains how to use the guide.
  
2. Know how the **plants are organized** in your field guide.
  - a. Check to see if there are **separate sections** for forbs, woody plants, grasses, sedges and rushes.
  - b. Determine the **primary factor in the order** of the plant pictures in the guide—color? families? other?
  - c. If pictures are arranged in color categories, note which **colors are in the same sections**. For example, purple, blue, and pink may all be in the same section in one book, but not in another.
  - d. Within that first organizational scheme (e.g., color, families) determine the secondary order –seasonal blooming order? alphabetical by family? alphabetical by scientific name?

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- e. If text describing each species is in a separate section from the pictures, determine how the **text descriptions are arranged**– by families? What is the order of families?
3. Use the **pictures** to begin to identify plants.
  - a. Find a **picture that best matches** the plant you are identifying.
  - b. Look carefully at flowering structures, not just color.
4. Use the **written description of the plant structures such as stems, leaf arrangement and shape, flower arrangement and shape and fruit/seeds appearance** to confirm your tentative identification. Make sure you understand the botanical terms (see Glossary) used in the description. In your personal copy of the field guide in the margin near the text, you may want to write your own translation of the term or make a sketch to help you remember the meaning.
5. Additional clues that can instantly confirm or reject your tentative identification are often found in separate entries from the description of the plant structure. They include **blooming period** (month or season), **sizes** given in text (plant height, leaf width and length, and flower width are often stated); **habitat** where you found the plant (prairie, woodland, roadside and waste places, fields, stream banks); **soil types** where the plant is found (sandy, rocky, clay); **plant's life cycle** (annual, perennial, biennial)
6. If the picture, description and other features are similar to the plant you are identifying, but not a good match, **note the family of the plant in the field guide**. Then go to the index to find other members of the same family to compare to the plant you are working on.
7. If you still can't find a match and your field guide has an **Identification Key**, work on keying the plant out.

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## WHAT DO YOU DO WHEN A “MYSTERY PLANT” IS NOT IN YOUR FIELD GUIDE

*Target Audience: Hobbyists, Landowners, and Managers with moderate plant identification experience*

1. Go to additional field guides.
  - a. *Roadside Wildflowers of the Southern Great Plains* by Craig C. Freeman and Eileen K. Schofield, University Press of Kansas (June 1991)
  - b. *Wildflowers and Grasses of Kansas* by Michael John Haddock, University Press of Kansas (April 2005)
  - c. *Tallgrass Prairie Wildflowers* by Doug Ladd and Frank Oberle, Falcon Pr Pub Co (September 2005)
  - d. *Missouri Wildflowers* by Edgar Denison, Missouri Department of Conservation (1998)
  - e. *Field Guide to the Common Weeds of Kansas* by T.M. Barkley, University Press of Kansas (1983)
  - f. *Trees, Shrubs, and Woody Vines in Kansas* by H.A. Stephens, University Press of Kansas (1969)
  - g. *Oklahoma Wildflowers* by Doyle McCoy, McCoy Publishing Company (March 1987)
  - h. *Ozark Wildflowers* by Donald R. Kurz, Falcon Press (1999)
2. Check more comprehensive books (try a library or internet for older books).
  - a. *Wildflowers and Weeds of Kansas* by Janet E. Bare, The Regents Press of Kansas (1979)
  - b. *Kansas Wild Flowers* by William Chase Stevens. University of Kansas Press (1961)

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- c. *Weeds of the West* edited by Tom Whitson, Cooperative Extension Service (June 1996)
  - d. *Botany in a Day* by Thomas J. Elpel, HOPS Press; 4th Edition (January 1, 2000)
  - e. *Flora of the Great Plains* edited by Ted Barkley, University of Kansas Press (June 1986)
3. Try the Internet
- a. Google Search **Use if you know the plant's common name or family.**
  - b. Mike Haddock's site: <http://www.lib.ksu.edu/wildflower/> **Can search plants by color.**
  - c. Jeff Hansen's site  
<http://www.kansasnativeplants.com/plantsearch.html> **Can search by plant characteristics.**
  - d. USDA site: <http://plants.usda.gov/> **If you think you know plant name, can be used to verify your identification; has maps that show presence of plant in specific counties and states.**
  - e. KSU Weed ID site:  
<http://www.oznet.ksu.edu/weedmanagement/weedid.asp> **Good source for weedy plants growing in disturbed soil.**
4. Compare notes with other native plant fans in your area.
- a. Find a partner or small group to walk with and puzzle out identification together.
  - b. Use the KNPS discussion email address: [discussion@ksnps.org](mailto:discussion@ksnps.org). Email pictures and questions and let our membership help you ID your plant.
5. Contact a **Kansas Herbarium.**

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Often photographs of the flowers, fruits, or leaves can be e-mailed to the herbarium to identify the plant.

Some plants need to be examined using magnification to determine the species. For this, take or mail a pressed specimen to the herbarium. Ideally the specimen should contain flowers or fruits, the leaves and the root.

KSU Herbarium [www.k-state.edu/herbarium](http://www.k-state.edu/herbarium)  
Division of Biology - Ackert Hall  
Manhattan, KS 66506-4901  
Mark Mayfield: 785-532-2795

Theodore M. Sperry Herbarium [www.pittstate.edu/herbarium](http://www.pittstate.edu/herbarium)  
Dept of Biology, Pittsburg State University  
Pittsburg, KS 66762-7552  
620-235-2740

R.L. McGregor Herbarium [www.nhm.ku.edu/herbarium/](http://www.nhm.ku.edu/herbarium/)  
2045 Constant Ave  
Lawrence KS 66047-3729  
785-864-4493

ESU (KSTC) Herbarium [www.emporia.edu/smnh/herbarium.htm](http://www.emporia.edu/smnh/herbarium.htm)  
ESU, Department of Biology, Box 4050  
Emporia, KS 66801  
Dr. Tom Eddy: 630-341-5617

## 6. Contact a **District Conservation Office**

Your District Conservationist at your local Natural Resources Conservationist Services office is another source where you can take in a specimen.

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## MOVING BEYOND THE BASICS: LOOKING AT SPECIFIC PLANT AND LOCATION FEATURES

*Target Audience: hobbyists, landowners, and managers with moderate plant identification experience.*

In order to identify plants that are unfamiliar to you or to differentiate between plants with similar features, it is necessary to become familiar with specific distinguishing features. Below is a checklist of plant structure and plant location details that can be very helpful in identification. Don't let the length and variety of topics on the list discourage or overwhelm you. You don't need to learn them all at once. Learning to identify plants is an incremental process. We recommend that you read through the list a couple of times just to begin to alert yourself to some of the possible clues that can improve and speed up your identification skills. You may want to focus on just one category (e.g. leaves) at a time.

As you begin to notice and work with the features, expect to depend heavily on your field guide and other sources. You will need to read carefully the text descriptions in the field guides for each individual plant you are trying to identify, noticing the various features. Refer to the line drawings of plant structures and check the glossary as you encounter new terms.

You may find it useful to carry a 10x hand lens with you when identifying plants in the field to check details too small to see clearly with the naked eye such as hairs on leaves, flowers, and seeds.

### i. PLANT STRUCTURES

1. Inflorescence —the flowering part of the plant and associated structures

a. Arrangement

- 1) Single - one flower on a stem (e.g. violet)
- 2) Multiple - flower heads made up of many individual flowers on separate stems (e.g. prairie parsley, milkweed)

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- 3) Composite - multiple small ray and disk flowers forming what may look like a single flower (e.g. sunflower)
- b. Shape
    - 1) Regular - symmetrical (e.g. rose family)
    - 2) Irregular - asymmetrical (e.g. bean family)
  - c. Parts associated with the flower head
    - 1) Petals – colorful part of flower
    - 2) Sepals – green leaf-like structures below the petals that form the exterior of the floral envelope during the bud stage (e.g. spiderwort)
    - 3) Bracts – a modified leaf at the base of the flower (e.g. curly-cup gumweed)
    - 4) Stamen—male part that carries pollen
    - 5) Pistil—female part
2. Leaves – form from a bud
- a. Composition
    - 1) Leaf – the blade
    - 2) Petiole – the stem of the leaf, not always present
    - 3) Stipule – leaf-like structure at base of stem, not always present
  - b. Arrangement
    - 1) Opposite (e.g. blue sage)
    - 2) Alternate (e.g. sunflower)
    - 3) Whorled (e.g. sweet Joe-pye)
  - c. Type
    - 1) Simple – individual leaves (e.g. ironweed)
    - 2) Compound – leaf composed of smaller leaflets (e.g. tickclover)
  - d. Shape (e.g. grass-like, heart-shaped, rounded)
  - e. Edges (e.g. toothed, smooth, lobed, wavy)
  - f. Bases (e.g. rounded, pointed, square)

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- g. Tips (e.g. rounded, pointed)
  - h. Veins
    - 1) Parallel (not branching, running alongside each other)
    - 2) Netted (branching in many directions)
  - i. Texture (e.g. smooth, wooly, hairy)
3. Stems – structure to which the leaves, flowers and fruit are attached
- a. Number (e.g. single, multiple)
  - b. Branching (e.g. none, frequent)
    - 1) Location (e.g. near the base, near the top)
    - 2) Arrangement (e.g. opposite, alternate)
  - c. Shape (e.g. rounded, square, triangular, flattened)
  - d. Position (e.g. upright, along the ground)
  - e. Surface (e.g. prickles, hairs, wings)
  - f. Underground
    - 1) Bulbs (e.g. onion)
    - 2) Corms (e.g. gayfeather)
  - g. Reproducing
    - 1) Stolons – above ground creeping stems rooting at point of contact, (e.g. buffalograss)
    - 2) Runners – above ground creeping stems rooting at the node, (e.g. strawberry)
    - 3) Rhizomes – below ground creeping stems, (e.g. Beebalm)
4. Roots - the below ground part of the plant
- a. Type
    - 1) Tap - main tapering root that grows vertically down, (e.g. dandelion)

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- 2) Fibrous - many branched thin roots, (e.g grasses)
  - b. Depth
    - 1) Shallow – weak shallow roots are associated with annual plants
    - 2) Deep – strong deep roots are associated with perennial plants
5. Fruits - the part containing seeds
  - a. Shape (e.g. capsule, pod, berry)
  - b. Texture (e.g. ridges, hairs, protrusions)
6. Seeds
  - a. Shape (e.g. sphere, disc, kidney)
  - b. Texture (e.g. veins, ridges, smooth)
7. Sap (e.g. milky, clear, slimy)

## ii. PLANT LOCATION

1. Region of state (e.g. east  $\frac{1}{2}$  , southwest  $\frac{1}{4}$ )
2. Physiographic region (e.g. Flint hills, Smokey hills, Ozarks)
3. Habitats (e.g. prairie, woodland, woodland edges, roadsides, waste places, agricultural lands, stream banks, lake shores)
4. Soil type (e.g. sandy, rocky, clay)
5. Slope (e.g. hillsides, valleys, hilltops)

## iii. GROWTH FACTORS

1. Growth habit

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- a. Colony forming - spreads by underground or above ground stems
  - b. Individual plants - does not spread by stems, only by seed
2. Above ground growth
- a. Woody - above ground part grows more than one season (e.g. sumac)
  - b. Herbaceous - above ground part grows only one season (e.g. goldenrod)

## iv. **SENSES**

- 1. Smell (e.g. onion, mint)

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## GUIDELINES FOR COACHING PLANT IDENTIFICATION

*Target Audience: experienced plant-enthusiasts coaching plant identification in the field.*

1. Keep in mind the goal is NOT just to tell the name of a plant, but to **give participants the tools** to identify plants when you are not there.
2. Know and **adapt for levels of knowledge and experience** (novice, intermediate).
3. **Build slowly and incrementally** from where participants are.
  - a. Don't overwhelm with too much information at once.
  - b. When using botanical terms, explain or paraphrase the term.
  - c. Initially use common names of the plants.
4. Structure the walk or hike experience so participants get **maximum practice and participation**.
  - a. Don't always jump into "lecture mode." Try these alternatives to promote dialogue rather than monologue.
    - 1) Sometimes when you approach a new plant ask if anyone knows the **name** of the plant—if they do, ask them to name it and tell how they know that is what it is.
    - 2) Or ask if anyone knows the **family** of the plant or what **other plants** it reminds them of.
    - 3) If there is time and participants have field guides, let them singly or as a group try to identify the plant using the field guides, while you coach them on the process.
    - 4) Encourage **relevant questions**.
    - 5) Use techniques to **promote understanding and retention**.

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- b. In the field, point out features about a plant that will **help them recognize** it next time.
  - 1) Go beyond the color of the blooms to the leaf, stem, flower, fruit/seed structures by which you identified the plant
  - 2) Note similarities to and differences from relatives or plants that appear to be similar
  - 3) Observe the type of location where the plant is growing
- c. Point out clues that will **help them remember the name** (e.g. meaning and origin of name, translation of terms in name, features the name reflects, silly memory devices)
- d. When a **plant is encountered later**, either repeat the name and key features, OR reinforce the process and identification by asking the group to name the plant and tell how they know their i.d. is correct.
- e. At the end of the session, ask participants (without looking at notes) to orally construct a list of all the plant they have seen and identified.

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## OPPORTUNITIES TO SHARE PLANT IDENTIFICATION INFORMATION

*Target Audience: KNPS Board and members who want to conduct training/mentoring*

1. The KNPS Annual Wildflower Weekend (AWW)
  - a. view plant family CDs
  - b. hold short instructional sessions
  - c. coach small groups during scheduled hikes
2. Any KNPS sponsored outing
  - a. offer a workshop prior to starting walk
  - b. coaching at sites for those who want to become leaders
3. A KNPS sponsored workshop
  - a. Schedule, organize, publicize an event in the member's community or several members collaborate in a central location.
  - b. Could have special emphases (e.g. how to use a key, botanical terms, tips on leading walks, identifying winter plants)
  - c. Use handouts, slides/power point, field guides, plant specimens to introduce processes and concepts.
  - d. Include practice (fresh or dried specimens), living plants in natural settings.
4. Prairie Patch Classes
  - a. The Patch award is an educational program where the student picks two species of plants, researches them, and identifies them. The application is available on the KNPS web site.

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- b. KNPS members can arrange a class either through an already existing organization (scouts, 4-H, summer day camp, local library, after school care, school group) or can offer and advertise a class on their own.
- c. At the first meeting, introduce participants to the Patch materials and give them an introduction to plant morphology and identification.
- d. Arrange for the participants to take part in a KNPS outing. It may be most helpful if you accompany them to the event.
- e. Arrange for participants to visit a location where they can collect data on their two plants. Depending on age and experience, you may want to monitor their progress and be available for questions and help.
- f. Check their completed "booklets" and assist in sending them in.
- g. Either arrange for class members to attend the AWW or be sure they receive their patches (maybe even have a "class reunion" and presentation ceremony).

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## Words of "Wisdom"

**Members of the KNPS Board share a variety of suggestions and techniques from their experiences identifying plants. As you can tell from their words, building knowledge about native plants is a complex, personal, but very rewarding process.**

Identifying plants is easier than most people think. Become familiar with a small number each season and make it a life-long learning process. Each year your new plant friends will greet you with a bloom and you'll say, "I remember you from last season!"

Valerie Wright

When there are adequate numbers of plants, collect a specimen of the new plant. This will allow you to take it home for identification when you have more time, resources, etc. After ID'ing it, press and mount it with the appropriate labeling. This will enable you to review it and refer back to it the next time you see it. It also will allow you to compare it to other plants in its family to see how they are similar and different. Photos with appropriate labels also are a great help.

Phyllis Scherich

I always bring a pocket sized notebook and pencil to outings to record the names of the plants (or birds, insects, reptiles, rocks, mushrooms, etc.) that I want to learn more about later from resources at home. It's also very memorable to learn something useful about each plant; for example, is it a favorite food for certain caterpillars or other animals? Is it edible, medicinal, or poisonous? Etc. And I like to experience a new plant w/another sense in addition to sight: feel the leaves' smoothness/roughness, smell the flower or a crushed leaf.

Shirley Braunlich

I always try to get people to notice the leaf arrangement, basic flower structure, and specific family characteristics such as square stem. I encourage them to attempt identification themselves by looking for simple characters that they can recognize.

Iralee Barnard

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As one who came to plant identification relatively late in life, I have been challenged to sort out wildflowers by the only two labels we're likely to hear: "genus" and "species." Then I realized that most of the botanical whizzes walking beside me were quietly using "family" as their first clue in identifying a mystery forb. A few plant families, most with quite distinctive features, contain a high proportion of the native plants we see, so I now knowingly say "it looks like an aster" (or "milkweed," or "bean") and go home feeling much younger.

Fred Coombs

When you photograph a plant, try to get the leaf, stem, flower, and seeding strategy (capsule, pod, etc). In your notes: type of soil, part of state, local topography, condition of soil (moist-dry...).

Sister Patricia Stanley

As for plant ID, in the beginning the scientific name seemed almost too difficult to learn. But as I slowly progress, common names seem far more challenging because they are so variable. I think it actually saves time and confusion to tackle a single scientific name for a plant than to try to remember several locale-specific names for a single plant, some of which may also be tacked onto a different plant!

Nancy Coombs

For beginners, learn to recognize the plant in its natural surroundings. Make a mental note about where it is located. Is it growing in thin soil with rocks or is it in a wetland? Observe closely, jot down characteristics, or take a picture of flowers and leaves. With the aid of regional plant ID books, the plant will likely be identified.

Cindy Ford

It helps me remember a new plant (or bird) when I take time to note in my favorite ID book where and when I first saw it. If it's similar to other species, I underline the distinguishing characteristics. If I'm not sure what I'm looking at, if possible, I press a sample in my book and find a "pro!"

Ann Feyerharm

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I would recommend that you find a person who is a level or two above you in identifying plants and pick their brain as you drag them off into the prairie. I also would suggest that you attend wildflower walks whenever possible and most assuredly you should join the KNPS or other groups to find others in your area who would enjoy sharing their knowledge and love for our native plants with you. A modest selection of books is necessary to advance your knowledge, and eventually you will learn to see the similarities that group the plants into related families and genera. And finally, never be afraid to ask others for help!

June Kliesen

When identifying plants, it's important to look at more than just the flower. Look at the flower in detail, count the petals; touch the leaves, what is the texture; pick a leaf, is there milky sap; smell the crushed leaf, what is the odor; look at the leaf arrangement, are the leaves opposite; look at the stem, what is its shape. I find it useful to study your field guides before you go out. That way when you see something, it might trigger your brain - hey I saw that in my field guide, it's blah blah blah.

Jeff Hansen

Become acquainted with a knowledgeable plant enthusiast. It always helps to have someone to ask for help with identification and to suggest good places to look for new, unusual, interesting plants.

Earl Allen

My insight is that when I tell people what these plants are, they can look up plants and learn all about them.

Carl Paulie

Find a plant ID partner who is about at the same level of expertise as you are and go out to natural areas on a regular basis. Two sets of eyes, two different minds, and constant challenges or confirmation of each other's identification will let you learn twice as many plants in half the time.

Nancy Goulden